Deaths of Indian seamen on high seas

1133. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are seized of a number of Indian seamen losing their lives in mysterious circumstances while on duty abroad ships on the high seas;

(b) if so, the details of such incidents during the last five years upto 31st December, 2006 indicating reasons for deaths in the respective instances;

(c) whether investigations were carried out into each incident of death;

(d) if so, the findings and action taken thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the details of measures contemplated, if any, for ensuring safety of Indian seamen on duty both with Indian and foreign registered ships?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (e) The number of Indian Seamen dead or missing while on duty abroad ships, the reasons for which have not been confirmed is as under:

Year	Number
2002	Not available
2003	2
2004	Nil
2005	15
2006	5

The details in each of the above cases are contained in the Statement (*See* below).

In cases where the incidents have occurred on Indian ships, preliminary inquiries were ordered immediately. In many cases, the preliminary inquiries have been completed. The recommendations of the inquiry officers have been generally accepted and implemented. In only one case of MV Faiz, a Formal Investigation by the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Kolkata High Court has been ordered.

As regards the incidents on board foreign flag ships, the inquiry is required to be conducted by the respective Flag States who normally take long time to complete the investigations and send their reports. On receipt of the report of the investigation from the Flag State requisite follow-up action is taken by the Government.

(f) The following steps have been taken to provide protection to seafarers at sea on board Indian or foreign flag ships:

(1) The Merchant Shipping (Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers) Rules, 2005 have been framed. The registration and licensing of manning agents have been made mandatory under these rules in order to introduce a sense of responsibility among manning agents and obtain details of seamen's placement.

(2) A psychometric test has been introduced at the entry level of officers in maritime training courses, which help in determining his/her attitude and aptitude for the sea. It assist in taking corrective measures to mentally prepare seamen for rigours of life at sea.

(3) The Directorate General of Shipping has also made wide publicity in leading newspapers with regard to the requirement of recruitment through registered Recruitment and Placement Services for employment in marine sector.

(4) A new course module has been formulated to sensitize the trainees with regard to rights of seafarers as laid down under the Merchant Shipping (Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers) Rules, 2005 in all Pre-sea Training Institutes.

(5) The matter has also been taken up with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) with regard to consolidating the international conventions with regard to shipping casualty and making the law stringent to bring around the non-responsible flag state to carry out their responsibility.

(6) The Directorate General of Shipping, Mumbai has issued an order regarding reporting of casualties within 24 hours and plan of action to deal with such casualties involving Indian seafarers on foreign flagships.

Statement

Details of deaths/missing cases of Indian seamen on board ships since 2003:

Year 2003

(1) One Engine Room Petty Officer Shri A. Arun Kumar went missing from ship M.T. Havildar Abdul Hameed PVC on 3.07.2003 when the vessel as at RAVVA Oil Field Anchorage—East Coast of India. The investigation was conducted by the Shipping Master, Kolkata on 7.7.2003. After due analysis of the statements of the crew members and the logbook entries the inquiry officer concluded that the reason for disappearance of Mr. A. Arun Kumar could not be established.

(2) A Second Cook was found missing while working on deck on board MV Mandakini when the vessel was 60 miles off Puerto Rico Coast. Enquiry into the incident is still in progress.

Year 2005

(1) MV Faiz when about 80 miles from Sandheads had a major fire at sea. This resulted in loss of the Indian Master, his wife and two children who were burnt to death. The Chief Officer went missing. Vessel was lost before the bodies could be retrieved. Formal Investigation by the Chief Judicial Magistrate of Kolkata High Court has been ordered.

(2) A Deck Cadet was found missing on board MT Janet while the vessel was in North Atlantic Ocean. The enquiry report is awaited from the Flag State Marshall Island.

(3) Tug Jupiter 6 off Cape Town went missing with all its 13 crew members, 10 of whom were Indian. The enquiry by the Flag State St. Vincent and Granadines have concluded that disappearance of M.V. Jupiter 6 along with her crew remains an enigma

(4) MSC Carmen had a case of reported suicide by 5th Engineers Hasan Zaheer while the vessel was *en route* from Karachi to Mombassa. Enquiries conducted by various authorities have concluded that no foul play could be suspected.

(5) 3rd Officer Mitesh Kumar on board M.T. North Challenge disappeared on 14.10.2005 when the vesel was *en route* to San Francisco. Enquiry conducted by the Consulate General of India, San Francisco concluded that no foul play could be suspected.

(6) An Indian Chief Officer on board MT Navarin was reported to be murdered while the vessel was *en route* from China to the Persian Gulf. Enquiry report from the Flag State of Malta is awaited.

Year 2006

(1) One seamen was found missing from M.V. Inchcape 11 off UAE coast. Enquiry report from the Flag State of UAE is awaited.

(2) Two seamen went missing of Socotra Island in Arabian Sea from Mariam VI after the vessel sank. Enquiry report from the Flag State of Panama is awaited.

(3) One seaman was found missing on board MV Equador Star while the vessel was *en route* to Lisbon. Enquiry report from the Flag State of Liberia is awaited.

(4) A mess man was found missing at sea on board MT Stena Contest. Enquiry report from the Flag State of Bermuda is awaited.

Transshipment port in Great Nicobar

1134. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are exploring the possibility of setting up a transshipment port in Great Nicobar island, the southernmost landmass in the Indian Ocean;

(b) whether it is also a fact that is a part of post-tsunami port infrastructure building exercise and a feasibility survey would soon be carried out on South Bay, North-East of Indira Point; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Conducting feasibility studies for development